

# PARKS

## VALUE STATEMENT

*I expect to have equitable access to safe and resilient parks and natural areas that meet my recreational and leisure needs, support health and well-being, protect the environment and offer opportunities to connect me to nature and others in my community.*

## Parks

### What is this Service?

Parks Services supports the recreational and leisure needs of the community. Parkland, both maintained and natural, enhances mental and social quality of life, economic, cultural, the environmental well-being of the community; and is a key component in sustainability plans.

### Objectives May Include:

- The public has equitable access to and uses high-quality and connected parks and natural spaces.
- Public spaces and parks are safe and climate change resilient.
- The public has awareness of the benefits of trees, green infrastructure and ravines.

### Influencing Factors:

1. Mix of maintained and natural parkland in a municipality – maintained parks can include a number of amenities and usually involve turf maintenance programs, all of which typically are more costly on a per hectare basis, than the costs of maintaining forests or other natural areas. The way in which parkland is delineated between maintained and natural varies significantly between municipalities, e.g. some municipalities maintain historic cemeteries as parkland whereas for other municipalities this is a private service.
2. Service standards established for maintained parkland- there can be significant differences between municipalities in the amenities available (greenhouses, washrooms, playgrounds, etc.), and the standards to which those parks are maintained (e.g. frequency of grass cutting, trash removal and pest control). There can also be differences in the costs of maintaining different classes and types of sports fields.
3. Level of management/maintenance applied to natural areas in parks (e.g., ecological restoration, community naturalization, trail repair projects).
4. Amount of parkland / trails in municipalities- limited availability of land in municipalities with a predominantly urban form, it may be more difficult to establish new parks in developed areas and acquire new parkland than it is in municipalities with greater rural areas. Acquisition of new parkland is influenced by Provincial legislation.
5. Population Density – areas with high density may be more costly to maintain because of delays to staff traveling from one park to another because of traffic congestion; municipalities with higher densities experience higher usage of parks, resulting in increased costs for litter pick-up, graffiti removal, amenity/equipment repairs, etc.
6. Geography - there is a large variation in geographic size between municipalities affecting the number of hectares, e.g. size of escarpment, varying topography, number of lakes, inclusion of rural areas and crown lands, and transportation networks.
7. Demographics and Community Use – Community/Resident demand for parks usage has increased in recent years particularly for large, social gatherings and various ethnic activities (i.e. specialty fields, cultural displays, community gardens, dogs-off-leash areas, special events, etc.). While these activities increase parks usage, they also translate into higher maintenance expenses, as well as increased staff training and

signage requirements. The operating costs related to these contemporary activities varies across municipalities; these costs are not captured separately.

8. Weather Conditions- affects all municipalities differently, however as we continue to experience more frequent and intense weather changes, operating costs are impacted (i.e. less snowfall means less snow removal , but increased rain could mean more storm clean up costs, longer growing season means more grass cutting).

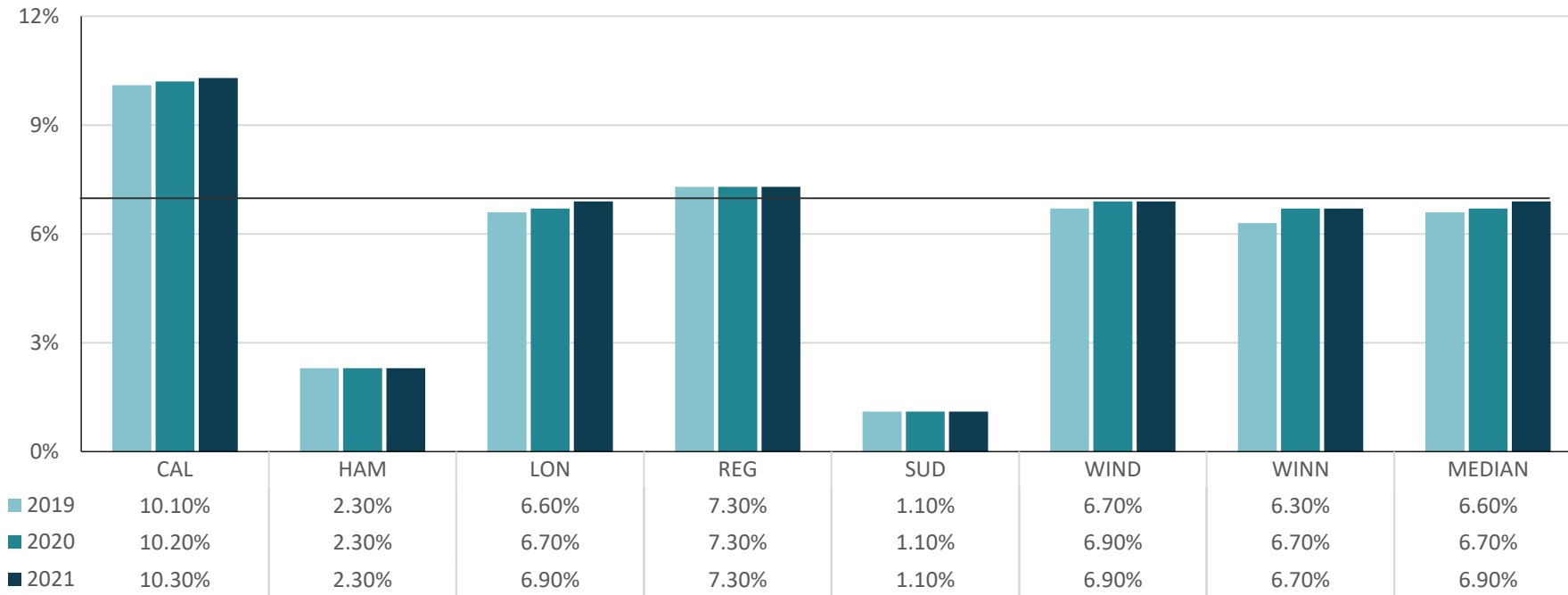
#### Extenuating Circumstances:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The staged lifting of provincial public health protocols implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic had a variable impact on parks services resulting in a staggered return to pre-pandemic service levels. Operating costs continue to be influenced by enhanced COVID-19 operational protocols addressing physical distancing, personal protective equipment requirements and increased cleaning requirements.

## Parks

### PRKS125 - All Parkland in Municipality as a Percent of Total Area of Municipality

This measure reflects all parkland (natural and maintained) as a percentage of a municipality's total area. While some municipalities with a predominantly urban form may find it more difficult to establish new or expand existing parks within their developed core area, others with larger geographic areas of unsettled lands may have small percentages of parkland. These account for the differences in the results.



Hamilton: When comparing Hamilton to other municipalities for this measure Hamilton appears to have an alarming low percentage of parkland. We attribute this to the large rural area that is included in the City of Hamilton boundary. Though the rural area provides many hectares of green space within the municipality there are fewer residents and far fewer parks per hectare in this area which brings the overall average down significantly.

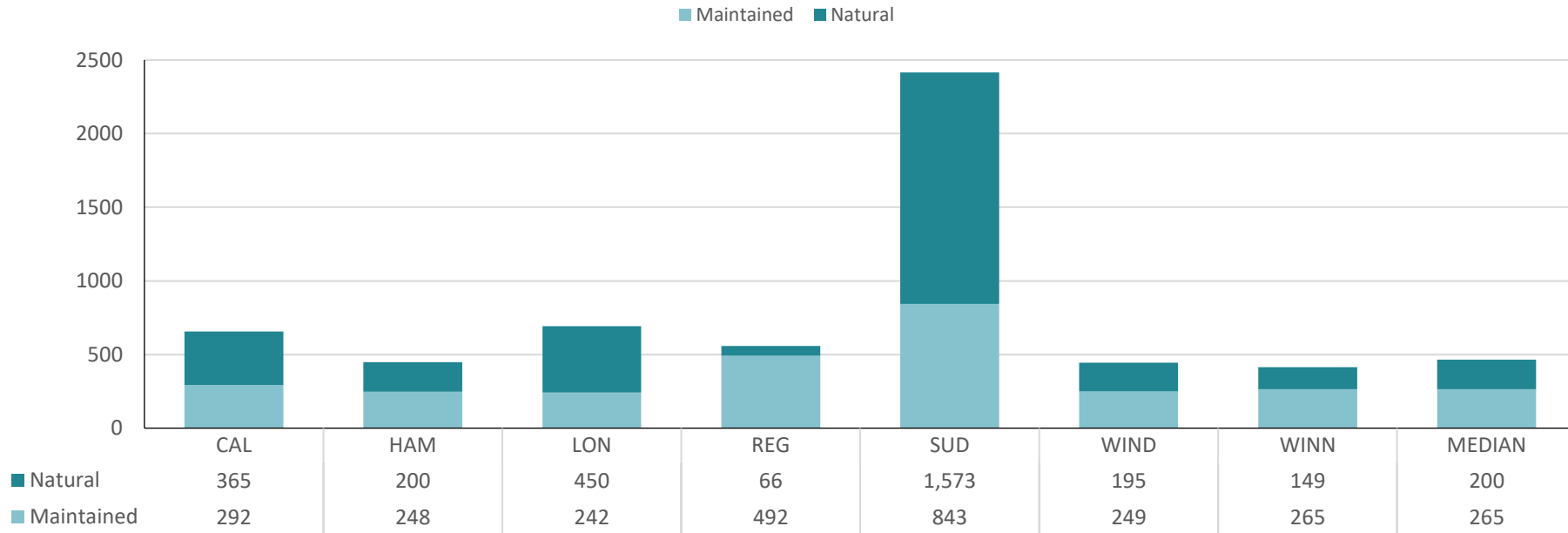
## Parks

### PRKS215 - Hectares of Maintained (PRKS205) and Natural (PRKS210) Parkland in Municipality per 100,000 Population

Maintained Parkland includes hectares where the municipality is responsible for the direct and non-recoverable costs (should incur costs) to maintain and are available for public use. This could include hectares owned by the municipality or school boards (if a reciprocal agreement is in place) and/or those leased from other third parties (through a formal lease agreement) as long as they are made available for public use.

Natural Parkland includes forests, meadows, storm water management buffer areas above the waterline (unless they are maintained to a high standard) which are lands surrounding ponds and rivers if these areas are part of the trail system or open space system which are available for public use. In many cases, there is little to no change in the number of hectares reported year over year, therefore only 2021 data is presented.

Total Parkland



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### PRKS230 - Operating Cost of Parks per Capita

This measure reflects the operating cost to maintain parkland. Maintained Parkland includes hectares where the municipality is responsible for the direct and non-recoverable costs (should incur costs) to maintain and are available for public use. This could include hectares owned by the municipality or school boards (if a reciprocal agreement is in place) and/or those leased from other third parties (through a formal lease agreement) as long as they are made available for public use. Natural Parkland includes forests, meadows, storm water management buffer areas above the waterline (unless they are maintained to a high standard) which are lands surrounding ponds and rivers if these areas are part of the trail system or open space system. These hectares include those for which the municipality is responsible for the costs (should incur costs) of maintaining and which are available for public use.



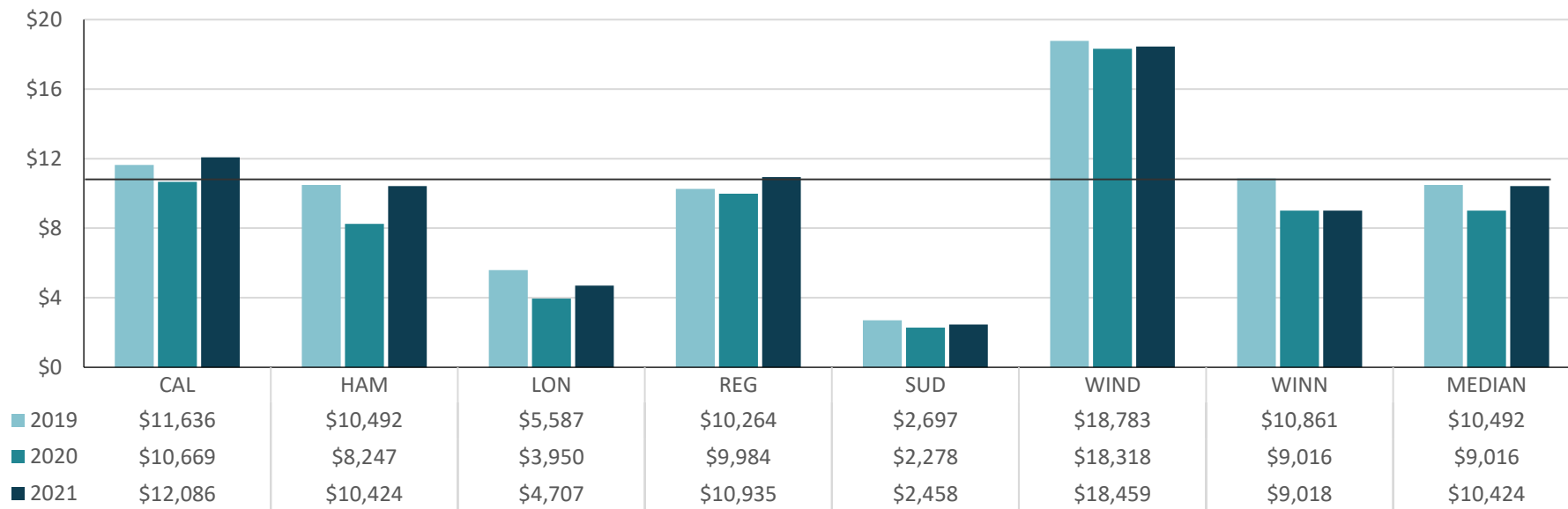
Hamilton: 2021 saw a return to normal service levels post COVID-19.

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### PRKS315 - Operating Cost per Hectare of Maintained and Natural Parkland

The measure includes the operating cost for maintained and natural parkland that the municipality is responsible to maintain and are available for public use. The higher the population density per hectare of parkland is, the greater the number of users, resulting in increased costs. Maintained parks have higher maintenance standards and levels of maintenance activity than natural areas. Differences in service standards established for maintained parks and variations in level of management applied to natural areas affect the results. Refer to Figure 22.2 for description of maintained and natural parkland.

In Thousands



Hamilton: 2021 saw a return to normal service levels post COVID-19.